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LETTER DATED 10 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on Lebanon issued on 9 February 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) António MONTEIRO
Permanent Representative of Portugal
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on Lebanon issued on 9 February 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union has been following the situation in southern Lebanon very closely and expresses its deep concern at the escalation of hostilities, its regret at the deaths and injuries which this has caused and its sympathy for the injured and the bereaved families. In response to attacks on its forces Israel has launched air attacks against the Lebanese infrastructure, causing Lebanese civilian casualties. In this context, the European Union recalls that the April 1996 understanding, in particular, aims to protect civilians from attack and the Union regrets any breach of this understanding. This escalation endangers recent progress in the peace process and the prospects of peace negotiations resuming on the Syrian and also on the Lebanese track.

The European Union calls on all sides to show restraint and to observe strictly the terms of the ceasefire understanding of April 1996, and calls for the early convening of the Monitoring Committee to secure a de-escalation of tension and to prevent further violations of the understanding.

These incidents confirm the urgent need for renewed efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the region, including implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 425 (1978).